



interpretations

a newsletter for Arizona's educational interpreters

Summer 2003

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Tom Horne

Superintendent of Public Instruction

The "Arizona Model"

Recently, Susan¹, a parent of a deaf child who moved to Arizona from another state, was stunned by Arizona's exceptional organization and delivery of services to meet her child's educational needs. "It was a remarkably different experience from the 'run-around' in my efforts to locate a program or school appropriate for my child in other states," she said. Susan discovered an efficient and accommodating "Arizona model" that strives to meet the needs of deaf and hard of hearing students throughout the state through a "central school" system. The Arizona model at ASDB has attracted national attention for its unique system.

"It was like a frustrating scavenger hunt to find the 'right fit' between my child and the programs or schools," Susan recalled. Frequently, those who referred her to another program did not have any first-hand experience with the operation of the options offered. Susan explained that it was "a bureaucratic mess and that people seemed to be more interested in finances and social policy than instructional services."

On the road to ASDB

The educational placement journey in Arizona began when Susan contacted Janis Jenks, Parent Information Network Specialist (PINS) and the point of reference for all the options provided in Arizona. Jenks provided Susan with information and access to all available resources throughout the state as well as a direct opportunity to meet with other PINS staff from a variety of public school programs. Susan was also referred to the Agency website, www.asdb.state.az.us, where she could learn more about her options. The system was in place and user-friendly. Susan remarked that, "Jenks provided clear direction regarding the schools and programs operated by the Arizona Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (ASDB) Agency at the Arizona School for the Deaf-Tucson, the Phoenix Day School for the Deaf, and the five cooperative school programs operated throughout the ASDB Agency in Flagstaff, Tucson, Yuma, Lakeside, and Phoenix

Continued on page 7

Please pass this on to your educational interpreter!

Interpreter testing/assessment news



RID testing is ongoing. The next generalist, oral, legal and certified deaf interpreter (CDI) (English Version) written test is scheduled for Saturday, December 6, 2003. For more information go to www.rid.org.

Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA)

The EIPA is one method for meeting the proposed educational certification requirements. It is the only option offered in Arizona that recognizes the differences of working in K-12 settings versus work with adults. The EIPA not only provides an overall rating, but also gives feedback to the educational interpreters on what area(s) of skill development he/she may need further training. Additionally, a report is provided to the state on the professional development needs of its educational interpreters, based on a summary of the state's educational interpreters' test results.

The next EIPA test is scheduled for October 24, 25, and 26 in Phoenix. To register, go to the web site www.jccc.net/RAS, or call 913.469.8500 #2788.

We are so sorry!!!

In the spring 2003 issue of interpretations we printed an article entitled "Educational Interpreting Certificate Program" in which we stated that nine individuals are on track to complete the program. Unfortunately, we left out a name. Although we did not give her appropriate credit, Anita Kreger, lead interpreter for the Southwest Regional Cooperative of ASDB, is completing the knowledge based portion. Look for her story in the winter 2003/2004 issue.

Picking myself back up...again.

Stephanie Hernandez, Tucson

I always imagined that after graduating from my Interpreter Preparation Program I'd join the exciting world of freelance interpreting. As usual, life had a different plan. My first job was in a post-secondary setting. It was a wonderful way for a brand new interpreter to sharpen skills and gain confidence. Previously, most of my experience was with a team and I always had someone to catch me if I was about to fall on my face. In post-secondary, I had the opportunity to interpret everything from cooking 101 to microbiology.

After a year, I had the good fortune of moving to Arizona. Once again I set my sights on freelance work but couldn't resist a set schedule and a community of supportive interpreters. I was hired by the ASDB SER co-op and into the challenging K-12 setting. I was excited.

Standing at the threshold of my new classroom, a myriad of doubts assailed me. Were my skills advanced enough to work with children? Could I uphold the code of ethics? What if I missed some important piece of information about one of my students and failed to report it to my team? Was it too late to back out?

Get a grip, Stephanie! You're as ready as you're going to be. I wiped the sweat from my palms, took a deep breath, and charged into my first day of work at a public elementary school with a facade of confidence. A half-hour into the class my anxieties bubbled over and I very literally fell on my face with no one to catch me. I grabbed for a nearby desk on the way to the floor, thinking, *I really wasn't ready for this!*

It's true what they say about hitting bottom, or the floor in my case; once you're there, the only place to go is up. Two black eyes, a bruised nose and a broken ego later I returned to face my students. I refused to give up. Gradually, I realized that I couldn't live up to the expectations I had for myself. Perfection is awfully hard to achieve.

This is not a job for the faint of heart. I've learned that my cohorts and I are all preparing to be unprepared, that every day is a new adventure. We can know our students needs, have memorized their IEPs, know all of the lesson plans and any topic being covered from now until the end of the year, and still things will happen that we aren't expecting. There are decisions to make and a constant struggle to identify and meet needs. Things come up that aren't covered by the RID code of ethics. Daily I discover new situations my mentors and supervisors somehow neglected to mention.

I was lucky that on that fateful day that left me bruised and battered, my supervisor was right there to take over for me, as well as assure me I still had a job. My fellow educational interpreters have become a professional support group to rely on for feedback and ideas to resolve the tough issues reinforcing the importance of being certified or EIPA rated.

Now, I expect to make mistakes, and learn from them. I strive for excellence, without the burden of needing to do everything right the first time. Even though educational interpreting wasn't my first choice, I've really grown to love it. I continue to charge into the classroom every day, certain that I have no idea what will happen, and confident that we will work it out together.



QUALIFICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL INTREPRETERS FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED

Below are the proposed Rules for Educational Interpreters. Christy Farely, Executive Director of the Arizona State Board of Education, expects to take a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to the Board's August 25th meeting. Please contact Christy at cfarley@ade.az.gov with any comments you may have regarding the proposed rules. While she cannot guarantee inclusion in the first draft, she is happy to receive feedback.

R7-2-620 Qualification Requirements of Professional, Non-Teaching School Personnel

A. Definitions:

1. "Educational Interpreter". For the purposes of this section, "educational interpreter" means a person trained to translate in sign language for students identified to require such services through an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a 504 accommodation plan in order to access academic instruction. This does not in any way restrict the provisions of R7-2-401(B)(14) which defines "interpreter" and provides that each student's IEP team determines the level of interpreter skill necessary for the provision of FAPE.

B. Educational Interpreters for the Hearing Impaired

1. Persons employed by or contracting with schools and school districts to provide educational interpreting services for hearing impaired students must meet the following qualifications from and after January 1, 2005:
 - a. Have a high school diploma or GED;
 - b. Hold a valid fingerprint clearance card, and
 - c. Show proficiency in interpreting skills through one of the following:
 1. A minimum passing score of 3.5 or higher on the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA), or
 2. Hold a valid Certificate of Interpretation (CI) and/or Certificate of Transliteration (CT) From the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), or
 3. Hold a valid certificate from the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) at level 3 or higher.
2. If a public education agency (PEA) is unable to find an individual meeting the above qualifications, the PEA may hire an individual with lesser qualifications, but the PEA is required to provide a professional development plan for the individual they employ to provide educational interpreting services. This professional development plan must include the following:
 - a. Proof of at least twenty-four hours of training in interpreting each year that a valid certification is not held or EIPA passing score is not attained, and
 - b. Documentation of a plan for the individual to meet the required qualifications within three years of employment. If the qualifications are not attained within three years, but progress toward attainment is demonstrated, the plan shall be modified to include an intensive program for up to one year to meet the provisions of section (B)(1) of these rules. An individual employed under the provisions of subsection 2 of this rule must also have the following:
 - a. A valid fingerprint clearance card, and
 - b. A high school diploma or GED.

- ### **C. Compliance with these rules will be reviewed at the same time as a PEA is monitored for compliance with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).**

Interpreting Determines Educational Access

CRISIS in Educational Interpreting Services FACT SHEET

In regular classrooms, hearing students generally communicate by speaking and listening. For many deaf students, however, interpreters are needed to facilitate communication with their teachers and classmates. IDEA requires that deaf students be integrated into regular classroom settings to the maximum extent possible, but if quality interpreting services are not provided, that goal becomes a mockery.

COED, 1988, p. 103

Schools are accountable for what their students learn

- Educational performance of students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing remains poor. The average reading comprehension of 18 year old students was reported at just below 4th grade on the SAT-9 (Traxler, 2000).
- If performance on standardized assessments is to improve, students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing must have full (100%) access to all aspects of the curriculum and instruction.
- The ability to learn is denied when students do not have qualified interpreters.

No Child Left Behind

- In addition to accountability, adequate yearly progress, and school improvement, NCLB addresses “highly qualified” providers. Educational interpreters must also be held to the provisions of this law. Because there are currently no national professional standards for educational interpreters, it is imperative that IDEA defines a standard.
- Current OSEP data is unreliable because there is no national professional standard.
 - US Office of Education 23rd Annual Report to Congress (2002), based on 98-99 school year data, indicated that there were 4,588 interpreters employed by schools in the US and that 567 (12.4%) were not certified. How are states determining whether interpreters are qualified or not?
- Schools must also have an objective, verifiable method of assessment to determine whether its sign language interpreters are qualified.
- Achievement is limited when students do not have access to a qualified interpreter.

Role of the Educational Interpreter

The educational interpreters responsibilities include:

- Interpreting all school-related communication according to the students language ability and the goals of the IEP.
 - Many students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing enter school with language competencies below those of their hearing peers. Interpreters must be able to convey the words of the instructor into language that is meaningful to the student.
- Tutoring, or clarifying, instructional information for the student.
- Participating on the educational team related to student progress and achievement.
- Providing expertise to the educational team (e.g., helping students learn to use interpreting services) (MENUS, p. 14).

“If communication goes awry, it affects the intellectual growth, social intercourse, language development and emotional attitudes, all at once, simultaneously and inseparably.”

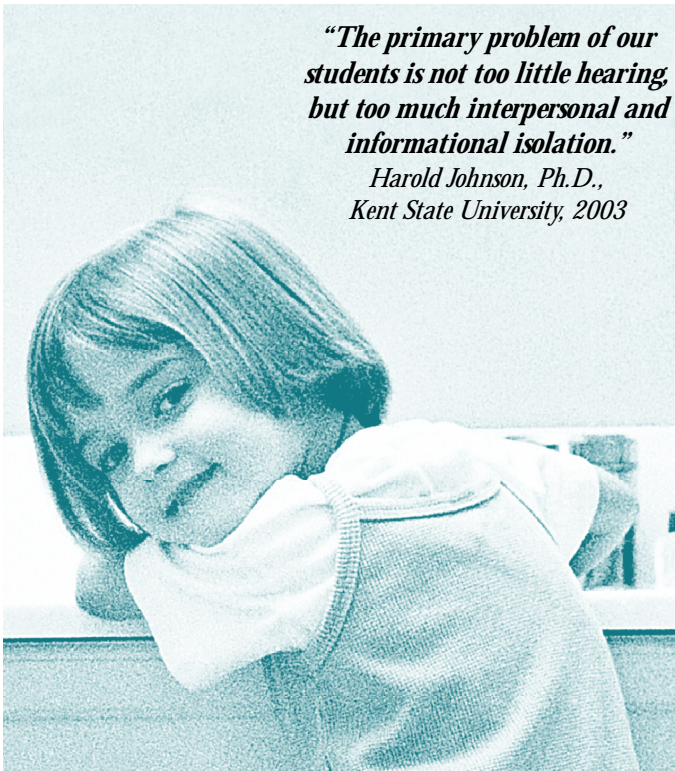
Oliver Sacks, 1989

Most children are not receiving services from a qualified interpreter

- Most states do not have minimum standards for educational interpreter qualifications (Project Forum, Nov. 2000, NASDSE).
- For states with minimum interpreter qualifications, many current standards are at a level that results in interpretation reflecting accuracy at approximately 75% of the classroom discourse (EIPA level 3.5), with frequent errors, confusions, and deletions.
- Most states have no measure related to the knowledge sets that are necessary in order to effectively apply the interpreting skills in a K-12 setting.
- For states with minimum standards, there is no reliable data regarding the percentage of educational interpreters who meet the requirements.
- *“The primary problem of our students is not too little hearing, but too much interpersonal and informational isolation.”* Harold Johnson, Ph.D.,
Kent State University, 2003
- Approximately 50% of working interpreters qualifications is unknown because they have not been evaluated. (Jones, In Press)

Communication remains the primary challenge within educational settings for students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing

- Each students communication needs are individualized. They are based on variables unique to the student, such as age of onset and severity of the hearing loss, as well as the students and parents preferences (MENUS, 2002).
- IDEA further requires that the communication needs of each student be considered. 34CFR300.346[a](2)(iv).
- 80% of students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing spend a portion of their day in the general education classroom; approximately 23% of these students utilize interpreters (Gallaudet Research Institute, 2003).
- For many students, the interpreter is the only communication link during their school day.
- 72 percent of families of children who use sign language do not use sign language with their children (Gallaudet Research Institute, 2002); for these children, the interpreter may be the only person with whom they can communicate effectively.
- Communication access is denied to students when they do not have qualified interpreters.



“The primary problem of our students is not too little hearing, but too much interpersonal and informational isolation.”
Harold Johnson, Ph.D.,
Kent State University, 2003

Recommendation for “Qualified Interpreter” in IDEA

Educational interpreters provide a variety of interpreting services (e.g., American Sign Language, Cued Speech, English Sign Systems, Oral) in an educational setting. Individuals who function as interpreters, regardless of job title, in providing these related services to students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing, should document the following:

Essential qualifications	Preferred qualifications
1. Associates degree in Educational Interpreting or related educational field;	1. Bachelors degree in Educational Interpreting or related educational field;
2. A passing score on a state or national assessment system of interpreting skills (e.g., State Quality Assurance, EIPA, RID);	2. A passing score on a national assessment of interpreting skills (e.g., EIPA, RID);
3. A passing score on a state or national assessment of knowledge sets to apply interpreting skills in educational settings (e.g., EIKA); and	3. A passing score on a national assessment of knowledge sets to apply interpreting skills in educational settings (e.g., EIKA); and
4. Continued Professional Development.	4. Continued Professional Development.

References:

GRI 2002
GRI 2003
IDEA
Johnson County Community College (JCCC) 2002. Regional assessment system, K-12 interpreters needs assessment, Summer 2002. Overland Park, KS: Johnson County Community College, Office of Institutional Research.
Jones, B. E. In Press. Competencies of K-12 Educational Interpreters: Ideal vs. Minimum vs. Real. In Winston (Ed.), Educational interpreting: The questions we should be asking. Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press.
MENUS (2002)
NASDE
Schick, (2002) EIPA personal Communication
Traxler (2002)
US Office of Ed (2002)

in a partnership arrangement with local school districts.”

“ASDB is a state agency with a legislative mandate to provide leadership and direction throughout the state,” according the agency superintendent, Dr. Kenneth D. Randall. A seven-person Board of Directors appointed by the governor governs the organization. The agency currently serves over 2200 students, birth through 21, in the two site-based schools of ASDB-Tucson, and the Phoenix Day School for the Deaf (PDSD) as well as the five regional cooperative programs.

The ASDB Agency is responsible for the hiring of personnel located throughout the state, from full-time classroom teachers, to itinerant teachers, to sign language interpreters, to communication specialists. They are all state employees of the agency, regardless of their physical location. Randall says that, “Deaf education has always been a relatively small, but highly demanding enrollment that is dependent upon the knowledge, skills, and abilities of instructional personnel.”

Students are evaluated through services provided by the Technical Assistance to Schools (TAS) component of the agency in either Tucson or Phoenix or through other assessment personnel throughout the state who have an appropriate background with a variety of student needs. Earlene Dykes, Director of Technical Assistance to schools noted, “Arizona is a very diverse state in terms of geography, population centers, and heritage. Members of the agency staff have learned to provide services in different manners based on the needs of the consumer.”

As a state agency, ASDB developed a “Student Accountability Program” for use among the site-based schools of ASD, ASB, and PSDS and the five regional cooperative programs. Data is collected on academic achievement and social skills development with approximately 700 students enrolled at ASDB-Tucson, and the Phoenix Day

School for the Deaf and over 1400 students enrolled in the regional cooperative programs. In addition, curriculum-based measurement, a progress monitoring system, will also be implemented in all of ASDB’s schools and programs by December of 2003. “ASDB Agency curricula that is aligned with state standards is utilized at site-based schools and in the regional cooperative programs,” according to Dr. Patricia McNally, Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Accountability.

Larry Siegel, Director of the National Deaf Education Project says that, “the promise of federal legislation was to provide students with a free and appropriate educational program in the least restrictive environment. However, the delivery of services to low incidence population is problematic.” Siegel believes this has resulted in a conflict between the fundamental communication needs of deaf and hard of hearing students and existing programs that do not understand nor provide for those unique needs. Siegel has developed materials regarding a communication principle that is an integral part of the National Agenda for Deaf Students.

The “Arizona Model” has made a significant difference in the lives of students, parents, and staff throughout the state by providing a stable, organized structure that is responsive to individual needs of students and their families at different points in the educational experience. The model provides a wider array of options with the potential of enhanced continuity of services and a more seamless and less competitive access to services which places the child’s families’ needs first.

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¹ The actual names in this article, where noted, have been changed to protect the privacy of the people.

interpretations is a newsletter...

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